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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 29 May 1990, at 7 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia)

- Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session (continued)
- Concluding statements
- Other matters
- Concluding statement by the Chairman
- Closure of the session

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The meeting was called to order at 7.30 p.m.

REPORT OF THE DISARMAMENT COMMISSION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: The interval between this meeting and the last has been used to good purpose. We have had useful consultations on agenda item 7 and have resolved the issue of the placing of the report on the item.

Mr. AKALOVKSY (United States of America): The United States, frankly, is not convinced of the validity of the arguments advanced in favour of changing what has been standard procedure over the past several years for handling the item entitled "Naval armaments and disarmament". In particular, we are not convinced that consideration of the item cannot be effectively concluded without including the Chairman's report as an annex to the report of the Commission.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of co-operation, good will and compromise, my delegation will not object to the inclusion of the Chairman's substantive report in the report of the Disarmament Commission. At the same time, my delegation would request that it be made clear in the appropriate places in the report that the United States delegation did not participate in any of the consultations that have been held on that subject nor does it in any way endorse or associate itself with the Chairman's report on the proceedings, conclusions and recommendations contained in his report.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to convey the Chairman's appreciation for the spirit in which the representative of the United States has conveyed the position of his delegation on the question of the placement of the substantive report on item 7 in the report of the Commission.

I have accordingly made certain formulations to be added to conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.6 in the third line of paragraph 4, after the words "by the Chairman". In the place of the word "Document" in brackets, please insert the words "annex II to the report of the Commission".

(The Chairman)

At the end of that paragraph, a new sentence will be added, which will read as follows:

"As in the past, the delegation of the United States of America did not participate in the consultations and is not in any way associated with their findings and recommendations."

In conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.2, at the end of paragraph 28, the wording that is found between the brackets, and the brackets themselves, should be replaced by the following:

"The report of the Chairman on item 7 is endorsed by all participants in his consultations. The delegation of the United States of America did not participate in the consultations and is not in any way associated with that report."

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): I appreciate the suggestions you have made, Sir, for the additions to the texts in reference to the report. However, I have one observation. It seems to me that, consequential to the change in paragraph 28 of conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.2, a full stop should be put after the figure "10" in the third line and the rest of the sentence deleted.

The CHAIRMAN: That will be done.

Thus, the first sentence of paragraph 28 of Conference Room Paper 2 will now read:

"At its 150th plenary meeting, on 29 May, the Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus the reports of its subsidiary bodies and the recommendations contained therein regarding agenda items 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10."

(The Chairman)

The following sentence will read:

"The Commission agreed to submit the text of those reports, reproduced below, to the General Assembly."

Mr. MACKAY (New Zealand): I hesitate to prolong the discussion on this item. My comments relate to paragraph 5 rather than paragraph 4 of conference room paper 6. I take it that paragraph 4 has now been dealt with.

As I recall, paragraph 5 was not discussed in the Consultation Group. I have compared it with similar paragraphs in other reports of the working groups. The language used in this particular paragraph is somewhat different from that used in the reports of the Chairmen of the other working groups. It is somewhat broader. I would suggest some minor changes to bring it into line with the approach taken with respect to the other items.

The amendments I propose relate to the third line of that paragraph, which I would suggest should read as follows:

"... the agenda item entitled 'Naval armaments and disarmament' was concluded." The present formulation, as I have said, is somewhat broader than that used elsewhere, and it would seem appropriate to us to make the specific reference in those terms.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope those amendments will meet with the approval of the other participating delegations.

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): I am not quite clear what the representative of New Zealand was referring to when he said that the language is not in accord with the formulations used in the reports of other working groups. I have before me, for example, the draft report of the Working Group on agenda item 8, which says essentially the same thing:

(Mr. Akalovsky, United States)

"In accordance with the decision of the Disarmament Commission made at its 143rd plenary meeting on 7 May, Working Group III decided to conclude the item and adopted the following text ..."

If anything, paragraph 5 here is less categorical than the paragraphs on items 7 and 8. But that, of course, also relates to the question I posed earlier in our deliberations when I inquired about the language regarding item 4. Perhaps the best solution would be for us to find a common formula for all items. I leave it in your hands, Sir, but frankly I do not see what the representative of New Zealand's concern was regarding paragraph 5.

Mr. NOREEN (Sweden): If the concern is to make the language consistent throughout the report, my delegation indeed sympathizes with that ambition. Perhaps it would be easier simply to write the following in paragraph 5 of A/CN.10/1990/CRP.6:

"It was understood that the consideration of the item was concluded."

That is exactly the same language used in the report on agenda item 8, to which the representative of the United States just referred.

Mr. MACKAY (New Zealand): I have no difficulty with that proposal. It seems to me that the difficulty is with the existing language, which falls between two stools. It does not say "the item" and if one makes a reference to the item it must clearly be very specific. But it has a generic reference to naval armaments and disarmament without specifically referring to the name of the item in that context. As I have said, if the reference is, simply, "the item was concluded", and if that suits the representative of the United States, I would have no difficulty with that. My difficulty is with the existing language.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of Sweden had a slightly different suggestion.

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Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): Frankly, I did not catch the exact formulation suggested by the representative of Sweden, but I would also note that if some of the comments we have heard just now are intended to suggest that the generic item, as it were, is not concluded, that of course would not be in keeping with the spirit of compromise and co-operation that my delegation has made every effort to exhibit in accepting the annex to the report. I would thus hope that we would stick to the exact formulation of the item. Though I did not hear the exact wording suggested by the representative of Sweden, perhaps that might do the trick. I would ask the representative of Sweden to repeat it.

Mr. NOREEN (Sweden): I should first like to recognize and express my delegation's appreciation to the delegation of the United States for the flexibility that it has shown on the question of annexing the Chairman's report to the report of the Disarmament Commission. My delegation sincerely appreciates that.

My suggestion was to bring the language into line with the language in similar paragraphs in other reports. On the second line of paragraph 5 of conference room paper 6, it would simply read:

"... it was understood that the consideration of the item was concluded." I believe that that is very close to the language used in the report on agenda item 8 to which the representative of the United States referred earlier.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is no problem with that suggestion, I shall take it that the report of the Chairman contained in paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.6 is endorsed by the participating delegations of the Commission.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to take up the report of Working Group III, on item 8, regarding conventional disarmament. I call on the Chairman of the Group, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin, representative of Denmark, to introduce the Group's report (A/CN.10/1990/CRP.7).

Mr. MELLBIN (Denmark), Chairman of Working Group III: It is my privilege to present the report of Working Group III, which was set up to deal with item 8 on our agenda, substantive consideration of issues related to conventional disarmament.

After 16 meetings and a number of consultations on the part of the Chairman with various delegations, which concluded with a final, all-out effort last Friday and this morning, the Group achieved final agreement by consensus on a substantive and comprehensive report on the issues related to conventional disarmament.

The text of the report is to be found in document A/CN.10/1990/CPR.7, with two small but important changes. First, the word "Draft" and the brackets round it are to be deleted from the title, which will now read "Report of Working Group III on Item 8".

Secondly, in paragraph 6 the words "by consensus" should be inserted where the dots currently appear, so that that line will now read:

"decided to conclude the item and adopted by consensus the following text".

In paragraphs 7 to 10 the report deals with the disarmament priorities and the general principles that apply to conventional disarmament, as well as the historical background and recent developments, with special reference to Europe and Central America.

The remaining paragraphs of the report, paragraphs 11-23, are devoted to a number of issues and possible measures in the field of conventional arms reduction and disarmament. These paragraphs deal with the implications of the accumulation and sophistication of conventional arms and the need for, and the responsibility for, reaching agreement and taking measures in the field of conventional

(Mr. Mellbin, Chairman,
Working Group III)

disarmament; the subjects and objectives of conventional disarmament; the European aspects; factors governing negotiations on conventional disarmament; the value of unilateral measures; the importance of regional efforts; confidence-building measures; verification; technologically highly advanced weapons; expenditure on arms and armed forces; the implications of arms transfers for conventional disarmament; the need actively to pursue the subject of conventional disarmament in the United Nations; and the desirability of the Conference on Disarmament's addressing the issue when practicable.

As will be recalled, it was at the session of the Disarmament Commission in 1987 that the issue of conventional disarmament first appeared on the Commission's agenda and that the Working Group was set up to deal with this item. Thus the report now before the Commission is the final result of endeavours that began four sessions, or three years, ago.

In view of the undisputed, paramount importance of the subject, and the complexity of the problem, which reflects a living reality for every country in the world, it is to my mind no small achievement that a report containing a broad range of general guidelines on how to approach and deal with conventional disarmament could be agreed upon by consensus among all delegations represented here.

I wish to put on record the fact that that result was possible only thanks to a concerted effort on the part of all delegations. It is no secret that at one time or another one delegation or another had to stretch its flexibility to the utmost in order to be able to join a consensus agreement.

I commend the report of Working Group III for favourable consideration and subsequent adoption by the Commission.

Before I conclude, I wish to thank my colleagues in the Working Group for their co-operation with, and support for, the Chair all along the stony road that

(Mr. Mellbin, Chairman,
Working Group III)

we had to travel in order to reach our destination. Likewise, I wish to thank the secretary of the Working Group, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, for his most valuable support in my task as Chairman of the Working Group.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any member wish to comment on the report of Working Group III on item 8, regarding conventional disarmament?

Ms. FIFFE CABREJA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The Cuban delegation wishes to state clearly its position on the text on conventional disarmament, because we believe that in some areas it is not balanced enough and in others it is incomplete, as it does not deal with issues of vital importance to the achievement of real and effective agreements in this field.

(Ms. Fiffe Cabreja, Cuba)

My country continues to attach the utmost importance to the Final Document of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, which establishes disarmament priorities. Although 12 years have passed since it was adopted by consensus, no significant progress has been made in nuclear disarmament, and military and non-military threats to security have not disappeared. The Latin American and Caribbean region is a clear example that the situation has not changed appreciably. Countries such as mine are now more threatened than ever, and the possibility of military aggression is a tangible reality. In this context, we believe it is not possible to speak seriously of conventional disarmament.

In my delegation's view, conventional disarmament must be seen within the framework of the whole range of international efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament in the context of the priorities set in the Final Document.

On the global scale, conventional disarmament would acquire considerable importance if we proceeded to eliminate all those means, including naval means, today used to commit acts of aggression and to threaten independent countries. Nor is it possible to study conventional disarmament without taking into account the risks posed by military bases in foreign territory, which constitute enormous arsenals of offensive weapons, or threatening military manoeuvres conducted along the coast or in the vicinity of sovereign States, which are simply forms of aggression threatening their integrity. Those practices not only constitute a threat to the countries directly involved, but also threaten the peace and security of vast regions of the world, with implications for the preservation of international peace and security.

In this context it should be recalled that the Heads of State or Goverment of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries said in the final documents of their Ninth Conference, held in Belgrade last September:

(Ms. Fiffe Cabreja, Cuba)

"the cessation of all acts of aggression against Non-Aligned Countries, the strict observance of the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, non-use or threat of use of force in international relations, peaceful settlement of disputes, self-determination, self-defence, and the removal of all economic and political pressures against Non-Aligned Countries will make it possible for all of them to contribute effectively to the process of disarmament." (A/44/551, p. 24, para. 18)

The document adopted today lacks another significant element: the necessary link between disarmament and development. That should be an essential principle in any text considered by our Commission. Disarmament measures, whether multilateral, regional or bilateral, should take that link into account, so that the resources released as a result of specific disarmament agreements can be allocated to the economic and social development of the signatory countries and so that the international co-operation needed for the progress of the third world as a whole may be promoted.

Another point on which we must express our concern relates to the application of scientific and technical advances to conventional weapons. Through this dangerous development, with its destructive effects, the dividing line between nuclear and conventional weapons becomes increasingly blurred, and is tending to disappear. In this respect, we are against the qualitative improvement of conventional weapons and the creation of new generations of weapons and weapons systems, such as the so-called smart weapons, leading to a new spiral in the arms race. Eliminating a significant number of weapons accomplishes nothing if at the same time the weapons remaining in nations' arsenals are improved. We believe that this aspect is not dealt with carefully enough or in sufficient depth in the document that the Commission has just adopted.

(Ms. Fiffe Cabreja, Cuba)

The points that I have briefly outlined should be essential elements not only of the conceptual framework governing conventional disarmament globally but also of all agreements in this field signed at the bilateral, regional or multilateral levels. Not to give them the attention they deserve would in practice mean jeopardizing the security of the signatory States, depriving them of the means they need for their defence and leaving them at the mercy of those who want, by any means possible, to dominate them in order the better to plunder them.

Every region has its own characteristics, and in each region the difficulties involved in concluding conventional disarmament agreements vary in nature and scale. Nevertheless, there is a common pattern that must be mentioned. In every case agreements between the States of a given region must be respected by all Powers outside the region. Otherwise, such accords would become a dead letter and could not be fully implemented. At the same time, that would serve as a disincentive to the conclusion of similar agreements in other parts of the world.

Although my country did not oppose the consensus announced by the Chairman of the Working Group, we believe that the document adopted by the Commission does not properly reflect the concerns I have just expressed.

I wish to state clearly that Cuba is completely in favour of disarmament, including conventional disarmament, for the achievement of peace and the preservation of the human race, but it must also be clear that Cuba is a zealous defender of its sovereignty, integrity and right to self-determination. Therefore, until Cuba is no longer threatened by the planet's leading military Power, until aggressive designs become a thing of the past, until general and complete disarmament becomes a reality in the international community as a whole - in short, until a spirit of peace, respect and harmony rules world-wide - Cuba will stand ready to defend the conquest of its people, whatever the cost.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no other comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group III on item 8, regarding conventional disarmament, as contained in conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.7.

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Now I should like to take up the report of Working Group IV on agenda item 9, "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade", (A/CN.10/1990/CRP.8). I call upon the Chairman of the Group, Ambassador Azikiwe, to introduce the report.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria), Chairman of Working Group IV: It is my pleasure to introduce the report of Working Group IV on agenda item 9, "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade".

Before proceeding, I would like to make a small amendment to the draft declaration contained in the report (A/CN.10/1990/CRP.8). The amendment is the result of consultations that were held since the last meeting of Working Group IV, and I do not envisage any difficulties for delegations. In paragraph 4 of the draft declaration, 10 lines from the bottom of page 3, the sentence now beginning "Pending the conclusion of a convention" should be changed to read as follows:

"The international community also calls for strict compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol."

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/119 H of 15 December 1989, which was adopted without a vote, Working Group IV worked intensively to finalize the preparation of elements of a draft resolution to be entitled "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". There has been a general wish among delegations to produce a concise and forward-looking draft declaration that could command consensus.

Using working paper A/CN.10/135, which is a reflection of the final stage of the work last year, the Working Group, as a first step, was able to identify the areas of agreement and others that might require some modification. During the first reading of the working paper valuable proposals and suggestions were made, and the preference for having a much shorter text without major alterations in the basic structure and content of working paper A/CN.10/135 became evident. On 15 May

(Mr. Azikiwe, Chairman,
Working Group IV)

I presented my summary of the first reading of working paper A/CN.10/1990/WG.IV/CRP.1.

On the basis of that document the Chairman held a series of consultations with several delegations with a view to bridging the gap in perceptions on certain issues and exploring common ground. Those consultations were very useful in revealing the basic positions held by many delegations on certain issues and identifying the level of acceptability for certain formulations.

The intensity of the consultations and the progress made were reflected in my second paper, A/CN.10/1990/WG.IV/CRP.2 of 17 May. In responding to the wish of the Working Group to refine the text further, and as a result of the formal Working Group meetings and informal consultations, on 21 May I produced yet another conference room paper, CRP.3.

In the course of the in-depth and extensive consideration, while a convergence of views was emerging in the wider areas of the text it also became clear that in some areas the divergence of views remained persistent. This included such issues as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the naval arms race, the role of the United Nations, the need to halt the arms race and to promote disarmament, the assessment of new developments in the international situation, the interrelationship between disarmament and other areas, and so on. In co-operation with delegations I exerted further efforts to strike a balance among the different positions in those areas in order to find a common ground that could make it possible for the Working Group to finalize the preparation of a draft declaration.

As a result, on 24 May I produced conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/WG.IV/CRP.4, which contained a wide area of agreement, with a few unresolved issues, including the issue of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and naval disarmament. On the basis of that document, final efforts were made to overcome the remaining differences. I wish to express my thanks for the

(Mr. Azikiwe, Chairman,
Working Group IV)

flexibility and the spirit of compromise shown on all sides, which made it possible for the Working Group to adopt an agreed draft declaration.

The 1990s began with a significantly improved international atmosphere, reflecting the relaxation of tensions and increased confidence among States. Confrontation and years of military conflicts are generally giving way to political dialogue and peaceful solutions. In particular, dramatic changes have taken place in Europe in the form of the reduction in the level of military confrontations, the democratization of political, social and economic processes and the overcoming of the division of the continent.

It is likely that a fast-moving course of events could bring about new and fluid situations in which disarmament, security and other issues directly related to the survival of mankind could possibly become more closely interactive. Positive signs can also be found in the fact that many States have now expressed their readiness to discuss, deliberate on, and negotiate issues on which there has been little or no progress in the past.

Thus, the new Decade offers immense opportunities for the advancement of the disarmament process in bilateral, regional and multilateral forums. The very fact that the Working Group could agree on a draft declaration, despite some difficulties, has exemplified this new trend and the Commission's ability to respond to these new opportunities. This is an encouraging development for multilateral disarmament efforts. Indeed, progress can be found in the acceptance of many elements and formulations in the draft declaration, some of which were not acceptable to delegations last year. The draft declaration may not satisfy every delegation's specific position on certain issues, but it is an important instrument for charting the course of our efforts in the field of disarmament in the years to come, and its contents should be shared by everyone the world over.

(Mr. Azikiwe, Chairman, Working Group IV)

With those remarks, I wish to recommend to the Commission for adoption the report of Working Group IV on agenda item 9, "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all delegations for their co-operation and support to the Chairman of the Working Group. Without that, and the trust extended to me, my task would have been even more difficult. My sincere gratitude also goes to the Secretary of the Working Group and to all those colleagues who helped us, and in particular to the officials of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the interpreters. Finally, it was my great pleasure to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Secretary of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no comments, may I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group IV on agenda item 9, "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade" (A/CN.10/1990/CRP.8)?

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: I would now like to turn to the report of the Consultation Group on agenda item 10, "Objective information on military matters", as contained in conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.9. I call upon the Chairman of the Consultation Group, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, to introduce the report.

Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria), Chairman of the Consultation Group: In the interest of all participants, I will be extremely brief. The Consultation Group held 7 meetings between 10 and 16 May 1990. At the beginning of the 1st meeting I made an introductory statement, and the first two meetings were dedicated to a general exchange of views on the subject, in which a large number of delegations participated.

(Mr. Hohenfellner, Chairman, Consultation Group)

In a follow-up meeting I suggested a structure for the discussion, which is contained in paragraph 6 of the report, and I shall spare the Commission by not reading it out.

At its 8th meeting, on 24 May 1990, the Consultation Group adopted its report to the Disarmament Commission by consensus.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, and all of the participating delegations. I recommend that the Disarmament Commission adopt the report as contained in conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.9 by consensus.

The CHAIRMAN: If there are no comments, may I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of the Consultation Group on agenda item 10, "Objective information on military matters" (A/CN.10/1990/CRP.9)?

The report was adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: Now that we have adopted all of the reports of the Commission's subsidiary bodies and consultation groups, I should like to thank the Chairmen of the various groups for the efforts they have devoted to the various subjects and for their co-operation in carrying out the tasks entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly.

We are now in a position to take up the draft report of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/1990/CRP.2). I call upon the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mrs. Liberata Mulamula, representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

Mrs. MULAMULA (United Republic of Tanzania), Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission: It is my honour and pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission at its current session, conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.2, which has been submitted to the members of the Commission.

(Mrs. Mulamula, Rapporteur, Disarmament Commission)

In accordance with established practice, the draft report is in four chapters: Introduction, Organization and work of the 1990 session, Documentation, and Conclusions and recommendations. The document contains factual descriptions of the Commission's work during this session. The sections of the report concerning the substantive work done by subsidiary bodies will be inserted into the text, namely, the reports of various groups that have already been adopted. As you may note, certain information has been left blank, and the Secretariat will complete the text in the definitive version of the report on the basis of meeting numbers and dates.

I should like to make an amendment to the draft report in addition to the amendment already read out by the Chairman, taking into account the fact that changes have been made subsequent to its submission to the Commission. In this respect I wish to draw the Commission's attention to chapter III, "Documentation". Paragraph 23 will be moved to section A as paragraph 22, and should read as follows:

"A document entitled 'Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission' was transmitted to the Commission by the Secretary-General (A/CN.10/137)."

The original paragraph 22, which appears under section B, should now be numbered paragraph 23, and the rest of the paragraphs will remain as they appear in the document.

With that brief introduction, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report as I have presented it.

On a personal note, I wish to thank the Secretariat for its valuable co-operation and for the assistance extended to me in the course of preparing the report. It was also a pleasure to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Lin, and the other officers of the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mrs. Mulamula, Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission, for introducing the Commission's draft report.

(The Chairman)

We shall now consider the draft report paragraph by paragraph. Are there any comments on paragraphs 1 to 20?

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States): There is one point which relates to our earlier discussion on item 7 that escaped my attention earlier. I refer to paragraph 18. A change was adopted in paragraph 28 which involved the deletion of the phrase "and considered the Chairman's report on agenda item 7". The same phrase appears in paragraph 18 so I would request that paragraph 18 be brought into conformity with the language in paragraph 28 as amended. We have to be consistent in the report.

The CHAIRMAN: The Secretariat will make the necessary adjustment in paragraph 18.

Are there any comments on paragraphs 20 to 27, paragraph 28 as amended, paragraph 29, paragraph 30 and paragraphs 33 to 36? If there are no further comments on paragraphs 1 to 36, I shall take it that the Commission agrees to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 1 to 36 were adopted.

The CHAIRMAN: We have thus adopted all paragraphs of the draft report. May I take it that it is the wish of the Commission to adopt the draft report of the Commission as contained in conference room paper A/CN.10/1990/CRP.2, as a whole, including all the reports of the subsidiary bodies and the report of the Chairman on agenda item 7?

The draft report was adopted.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The CHAIRMAN: We come now to the final stage of our work at this session, namely, concluding statements by delegations.

Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): May I congratulate you, Sir, on the important and significant results we have achieved under your inspiring and wise leadership. I also thank the Rapporteur, Mrs. Liberata Mulamula of the United Republic of Tanzania for her work. For the first time this Commission has been able to adopt substantive recommendations on virtually all of its agenda items. Let me briefly comment on the substantive results of this year's work.

As a South Atlantic State with close historical, cultural and political links with Africa, my delegation is particularly pleased at the adoption by consensus of the document dealing with the nuclear capabilities of South Africa. In joining that consensus we were consistent with our traditional commitment to contribute to the end of the heinous régime of apartheid.

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

However, the text as presented to the Working Group for adoption posed a difficulty of an entirely different nature for my delegation and we are grateful that the African delegations were able to work with us to accommodate our position on that particular issue. Brazil has always been opposed to all kinds of discrimination, whether racial, political or technological. We agree whole-heartedly with Ambassador Ijewere of Nigeria, who, when representing his country in the Conference on Disarmament, once voiced his opposition to the institutionalization of what he described as "nuclear apartheid". For this reason my delegation would not have been able to accept an unqualified call to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty.

I had the privilege of sharing with Ambassador Moritan of Argentina the chairmanship of Working Group II on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. The adoption of a substantive report on that item was possible only because of the efforts made previously by Ambassador Garcia Moritan in drafting the text on the basis of which consensus was achieved.

The provisions of document A/CN.10/137, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", were adopted for application at the 1991 session. The consensus documents achieved in items 5 and 6, together with the adoption, also by consensus, of a document on issues related to conventional disarmament and of the draft declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade are proof of the vitality and the effectiveness of the Commission as a deliberative body on disarmament and, above all, of the commitment of all delegations in further strengthening its role and responsibility.

In our view those consensus reports once again highlight the fact that effectiveness is not predicated on procedure; rather it derives from the political commitment to the achievement of concrete results.

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

On item 10, "Objective information on military matters", consensus was not sought at this stage. The Commission will take this matter up at its next session.

The deliberations on item 7, "Naval armaments and disarmament", indicate that the overwhelming majority of the members of the Commission wished this question to be addressed substantively. This year's report should serve as the basis for further consideration of questions relating thereto and, it is hoped, with the full participation of the membership.

Another matter that has been the subject of deliberations over a number of years appears in the formulation of item 4. According to the provisions of document A/CN.10/137 consideration of those questions under the present form of item 4 should be concluded. Nevertheless, the very fact that consensus on those very relevant questions has so far eluded us should serve as an additional indication of the high priority that the international community attaches to the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament as well as to the elimination of the danger of nuclear war and therefore to the need to continue deliberations on those questions.

This brings me to the question of the organization of our future work, particularly as regards the criteria that should orient the composition of the working agenda. In my statement in the general exchange of views I pointed out two of those criteria. First, our basic platform should remain the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Secondly, our working agenda should be set strictly in line with prevailing universal concerns and interests. Focus, thought and progress should be concentrated in the priority areas as defined in the Final Document. Each year, in selecting the items to be included in the working agenda, those two criteria should be kept clearly in mind.

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

The third and last criterion is related to the way to reach agreement on the working agenda. The working agenda should be seen as a whole and negotiated as such. Therefore, the result of our negotiations should be a balanced agenda in which different interests and positions can be contemplated in the selection of the four items.

While my delegation is ready to engage in negotiations on next year's working agenda, we believe that our task has been facilitated by the results of this year's deliberations, which have already provided us with two of the four items that could be in our working agenda. The first obviously must deal with nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war. The overwhelming majority of members attribute the highest priority to those questions, regarding which we have not yet been able to agree on a substantive consensus report. The second item would be "Objective information on military matters", which has just got under way at this year's session.

As a parting thought, may I just stress that in our view the streamlining of procedure should not be seen as an end in itself but rather as a way to facilitate the achievement of the real substantive objectives for which the Disarmament Commission was created.

Mr. KRASULIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Today we can all take pride in the major success achieved in the work of the Commission, one of the most important successes in the 11 years of its existence. For the first time we have succeeded in preparing great documents on almost all items on the agenda. Of course, this success is not isolated. It should be viewed primarily within the context of the major positive changes which are occurring in the world today and the work of the Commission was imbued with that spirit. The results of the session clearly confirm the growing significance of multilateral dialogue about the ways and means of consolidating international

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

security in all its aspects. Here the central role in ensuring that all steps taken, whether unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral, should form part of a single whole and this role belongs to the United Nations.

Today the renaissance of the Organization which is manifesting itself in the productive use of its peace-making functions cannot fail to include the field of disarmament. The practical question now arises of improving the style and methods of work in the United Nations in this major area.

It is very important to take active steps to ensure that the United Nations moves as rapidly as possible from unformulated or conflicting positions of States in questions of disarmament to a successful and efficient search for agreed approaches and decisions on the basis of a balance of interests. Therefore, we welcome the adoption at the forty-fourth session of a resolution on ways and means to enhance the functioning of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We can now safely state that this decision has had the best possible effect on the work of the Commission. To take stock of the session which is coming to an end today, there is one thing we should point out in particular: the Commission succeeded in carrying out the mission entrusted to it by the General Assembly and concluded a discussion of all the items on the agenda except for one new item, on which work will continue next year.

A major positive outcome of the session was the adoption of agreed documents on such important items as a declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade, disarmament in the conventional field, naval armaments and disarmament, the nuclear capability of South Africa and the role of the United Nations in disarmament. Clearly those documents confirm the importance and effectiveness of a comprehensive approach to strengthening trust and security and to limiting and reducing through negotiations all the components of military arsenals.

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

I should like in particular to highlight two points: the declaration of the third disarmament decade, after its approval by the General Assembly, will, in our view, become a major signpost for subsequent bilateral, regional and global steps in the disarmament field. It is especially important that this brief but substantial document contains the broad outlines of the essential prospects of United Nations activities as a centre for harmonizing the activities of States in working towards a safer and more stable world.

As regards the document on the questions of reducing military activities and armaments at sea, it should, as we see it, serve as the beginning of a serious dialogue between the major naval Powers, including of course the United States, with a view to full-scale negotiations on confidence-building measures and ensuring the security of maritime communications and reducing naval forces with their nuclear and conventional armaments.

We are satisfied with the useful work done in the Group on Objective Information on Military Matters. We hope that a more profound study of this problem next year will lead to the production of a detailed document that will reflect the importance of military openness as an effective factor in universal security, disarmament and confidence building and allot an active role in this area to the United Nations.

We did not succeed in reaching an agreed solution in the Group on nuclear disarmament, but there is nothing unexpected about this. The work of this Group has once again demonstrated how difficult is the process of searching for a common denominator among positions based on constructive co-operation and not on the imposition of unilateral approaches. The course of the discussion in the Group also showed that we still have a lot to do in order to overcome, in the work of the Commission, inertia, confrontation, elements of double standards and sometimes fine declarations that are not backed by concrete proposals.

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

The results of the Commission's session make it absolutely clear that what is particularly necessary now in order to achieve real results is a re-analysis of the experience accumulated over the years of this body's work and the formulation on this basis of new and fresh approaches. That is why we agree with the consensus in the Commission on the need to continue consultations in the intersessional period in the course of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly so that at the organizational session at the beginning of December the Commission can reach consensus on the parameters for its further work, primarily in so far as concerns the four items on the working agenda for the 1991 session.

I wish to assure the Commission that the Soviet Union intends to continue to contribute actively to the Commission's work and to participate actively in all spheres towards consolidating international security - above all in its key area, namely, limiting the military arsenals of all countries within the strict framework of reasonable sufficiency for defence. In so doing we shall strive for a constructive parallelism between bilateral and multilateral efforts so as effectively to promote the globalization of the disarmament process.

In conclusion I should like to commend you, Mr. Chairman, on your tireless personal efforts and on the sense of purpose and great diplomatic skills which you have displayed in carrying out your difficult task. We are sure that in the months to come these qualities will help you to prepare successfully for the December meeting of the Commission and we wish you every success in this work.

Of course we must pay a tribute also to the Chairmen of all the working groups, whose leadership made it possible to channel the work of the Commission's subsidiary bodies on all problems in business-like directions and produce palpable results. I should like also to thank for the great contribution they made to our work the representatives of the Department for Disarmament Affairs headed by Under-Secretary-General Akashi. And as always we would not have been able to do

(Mr. Krasulin, USSR)

anything without the constant support of the Conference Services staff, and we thank them very much for their efforts.

Mr. SOB (Cameroon): Speaking as I am for the first time in this forum, I wish to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as our Chairman. With your many years of effective leadership in various related bodies, all of us in the Commission are grateful for your able guidance of this successful session. Through you, Mr. Chairman, we extend our congratulations to the other outstanding officers of the Commission.

The universal character of the United Nations predestines it, in the first instance, to promote multilateral, comprehensive disarmament measures. Over the years the United Nations has on many occasions been able to play a prominent role in the process of negotiation of multilateral disarmament agreements.

To be successful the disarmament activities of the United Nations have to be supported by all States, in particular by all nuclear-weapon States that are permanent members of the Security Council and bear a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are of the express view that if the desire to enhance the United Nations role in the disarmament field and to make the existing multilateral machinery more efficient is genuine, then one would expect that Member States animated by this lofty goal would show the necessary political will in utilizing to the fullest possible extent the institutional arrangements exercised by the Organization.

The efficiency of this body, as of any negotiating or deliberating body, depends not on the duration of its sessions nor even on its financial implications, but on the political will of Member States and on the concrete results achieved. These are the conditions by which the Commission, which is the only multilateral deliberating body for disarmament, can be measured in the consideration of various

(Mr. Sob, Cameroon)

items of its programme of work. In this connection we are pleased to see that at its current session the Commission has adopted by consensus document A/CN.10/137 on ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission.

(continued in French)

The adoption of the aforementioned document, the consensus which the Commission reached on issues as delicate and complex as South Africa's nuclear capability and the consideration of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, as well as other questions of equal importance considered in the course of this session, questions involving, inter alia, conventional disarmament and the Third United Nations Disarmament Decade, constitute remarkable progress and a real source of hope.

It is indeed our hope therefore that this substantive session of the Commission will be a new starting-point based on our shared determination to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to achieve the objectives set by the Charter and by the bodies of the Organization responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security and disarmament.

The present dynamics of international relations and the renewal of multilateralism should allow Member States to take a more constructive approach to questions of peace and security and to strengthen further the multilateral process of disarmament, which is the mainstay of the efforts made by Member States that are in the front line, among which we should mention the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In this connection we should like to highlight and commend General Assembly resolution 44/21 of 15 November 1989, submitted jointly by those two countries and which reflects their mutual commitment to promoting international peace and security as well as international co-operation in the framework of the United Nations. This resolution inspires real optimism about the future role of the

(Mr. Sob, Cameroon)

United Nations and the important achievements that Member States can make together for peace, disarmament and development. The recent initiatives of the United Nations in the settlement of local conflicts constitute excellent examples of this. The time has undoubtedly come, as has been suggested by the Secretary-General, for our Organization to attach high priority to maintaining peace and promoting the well-being of all peoples.

(Mr. Sob, Cameroon)

Specifically in connection with the positive results of this session, which is now drawing to a close, delegation would like to point out that these achievements have been possible only thanks to the collaboration of all Member States and the spirit of consensus that prevailed in spite of differences of view and conflicts of interests.

Hence the Commission has been able, inter alia, to arrive at a broad consensus on its recommendations on the item entitled "Review of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament", an item that has been on its agenda since its substantive session of 1985. My Government, which initiated this project in resolution 39/151 G, is delighted at the fact that the Commssion has been able to complete its work on this question in a satisfactory way. In a world of constant change it is necessary for Member States to have a single forum in which to harmonize their views and efforts in the shared quest for peace and the well-being of all peoples.

Of course the Commission's report that we have just adopted does not reflect every individual position of our respective delegations. None the less it does in the last analysis represent the result of concerted efforts on the part of all parties concerned to arrive at consensus.

The Cameroonian delegation would like to express through you, Mr. Chairman, its admiration to Mr. Butler of Australia who, in his capacity as Co-ordinator of the Working Group during two successive sessions of the Commission, actively contributed to the drafting of the informal working paper that served as a basic document for negotiations and consultations in the consideration of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We are particularly grateful to Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina for the competent way in which he directed the work of Working Group II. We also extend our appreciation to Ambassador Sergio de Queiroz Duarte of Brazil, the last Co-ordinator of the Working

(Mr. Sob, Cameroon)

Group, and to the Secretary of the Group as well as to the support staff of the Secretariat.

Lastly, in connection with the problem of choosing new items to be inscribed on the Commission's agenda, my delegation believes that the priorities set by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament remain valid. The dynamic evolution of current international relations should make it possible for us to adopt a resolutely innovative and positive approach to questions related to disarmament and arms limitation at the global level.

Along the same lines we should like to highlight the importance of the criteria used to select questions for our Commission's agenda. Of course differences do remain because of the priorities set by individual States in the field of disarmament. But in the last analysis it is important for Member States to arrive at an agreement on criteria that allow a selection of subjects whose universality, relevance and importance will make it possible for the Commission to conduct its deliberations in a fruitful way in the interests of international peace and security.

In this respect we believe that subjects such as "confidence-building measures at the regional level", "scientific and technical progress in the arms race" and "global issues" could be included in the Commission's future work.

Mr. CHADHA (India): Mr. President, as we come to the end of the current session of the Disarmament Commission, my delegation would like to extend our felicitations to you, the other members of the Bureau and the Secretariat on the successful conduct of our proceedings, resulting in the satisfactory conclusion of deliberations on a number of outstanding issues.

This session of the Disarmament Commission has proved that while concepts and perceptions of security differ, the common objective of States is the strengthening

(Mr. Chadha, India)

of national security and the maintenance of international peace. However, differences in historical backgrounds, political institutions and social and economic systems of States should not constitute insurmountable obstacles to international co-operation in the pursuit of peace and security if our perceptions rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than on a threat of mutual destruction. The consensus documents that have emerged at this session on the declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade, on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, and on the question of conventional disarmament illustrate that such a perception does exist. My delegation is particularly pleased that on the basis of such perceptions we have also been able to pronounce ourselves finally on the nuclear capability of South Africa and the threat to international security that the policy of apartheid poses to the world.

While expressing our satisfaction with the tasks accomplished at this session, we must be aware that we have mastered only some of the notes but none of the music of disarmament priorities that we had agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. India firmly believes that the priorities and disarmament strategies agreed upon at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, along with the machinery it established, provide a sound basis for resolving the issues of our times.

The present international climate provides an ideal setting for us to reinforce our commitments. While we have reiterated our obligations all along, we have so far failed to build upon the foundations laid at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Thus, while the pace of dialogue between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has quickened and the two alliances in Europe are engaged in serious and substantial negotiations, our optimism is still tentative. Obviously, much more needs to be

(Mr. Chadha, India)

done to ensure that the perception of positive trends is confirmed and reinforced and that the disarmament and demilitarization process is made irreversible.

The means for a world order based on collective security are available to us in the scientific and technological revolutions of the present century. The arms race has made science and technology the master of war rather than the servant of peace. Quantitative disarmament measures are therefore important, but not enough as their limited gains are quickly eroded by the development of new weapons systems and through the technological escalation of the arms race. The qualitative aspect of the arms race has therefore to be addressed as a matter of urgency. This requires increased transparency in research and development in frontier technologies with potential military applications, and the cessation of military applications of such research.

The process of dialogue must be taken quickly to its logical and ultimate conclusion by ridding the world for ever of nuclear weapons. The elimination of this apocalyptic hardware must go hand in hand with changes in attitudes and in the institutions required to usher in and manage a non-violent world order free of nuclear weapons. My delegation notes with regret that, in spite of the sustained efforts of the international community, little progress has been achieved in this field. This trend has manifested itself in our deliberations on item 4 of our agenda this year. Nuclear disarmament, and in this context the prevention of nuclear war, must remain the priority objective. The apathy towards this objective, coupled with the continued testing and building up of nuclear arsenals and their global impact, has placed the international community in a very dangerous situation indeed. There is need for steps to reverse the current trends and set ourselves firmly on the path towards peace and prosperity.

It is our firm conviction, therefore, that our future agenda must reflect the priorities established in the first special session of the General Assembly devoted

(Mr. Chadha, India)

to disarmament, since these are based on matters of universal concern. Any attempt to move away from our agreed priorities and strategies would delay the achievement of our ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament even further. This goal calls for action on a global scale. Partial measures will not suffice. The regionalization of issues will take us away from matters of universal concern and distort our focus of attention, thus hampering our efforts to halt the arms race. Similarly, confining our discussions to issues peripheral to the central disarmament priorities might give us the ephemeral satisfaction of evolving consensus texts but will divert our attention away from the seminal theme of collective security based on an interdependent world.

(Mr. Chadha, India)

In our view, if the Disarmament Commission is to serve its purpose, it must squarely confront the central issues in disarmament facing us today so that we may be able to begin negotiations as a matter of urgency with a view to concluding international agreements that can command universal adherence. During the past century the global international legal order has been steadily improved, steering a precarious course in the struggle between those upholding armed force and those advocating equitable co-operation. Past experience has confirmed that the greatest progress was made in the development of international law when the interests and stands of new socio-political forces were enabled to manifest and even assert themselves. We have the choice of becoming the saviours of posterity or its executioners. Let us opt for life.

Mr. WHELAN (Ireland): Speaking on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, I should like first of all, Sir, to express to you our appreciation for your untiring efforts to bring our work to what is now a successful conclusion. I should like also to record our gratitude to the other members of the Bureau, especially for the excellent manner in which they presided over the activities of the subsidiary groups.

It now seems clear that a considerable measure of substantive agreement has been achieved at this session of the Disarmament Commission. The overall outcome of our deliberations has been encouraging and positive, and a source of satisfaction to all delegations. In the view of the Twelve, the Commission's achievement is attributable to a combination of propitious circumstances.

In the first place, Mr. Chairman, the Commission has been most fortunate to have had the benefit of your exemplary leadership and steadying influence. We are also indebted to the Chairmen of the subsidiary groups for their contribution to what has been achieved.

(Mr. Whelan, Ireland)

In addition, we feel that the conciliatory climate and spirit of compromise that prevailed during the session played a significant part in producing this gratifying result. That climate is itself a reflection of the continuing improvement in East-West relations and the progressive relaxation of international tensions. Furthermore, it is clear that all delegations were firmly committed to the implementation, in full, of the Commission's agreed reform programme beginning this year. The experience gained at this session paves the way towards the elaboration of an agreed working agenda for 1991 and so bodes well for the future of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

As we stated in our intervention on the opening day of the session, the Twelve attach great importance to all items currently before the Disarmament Commission. Given the diversity and complexity of our agenda, it is remarkable that we were able to arrive at agreed recommendations on most of the items under consideration. In the case of conventional disarmament it is a cause of particular satisfaction to us that the Working Group on the subject, which was presided over with commendable skill by one partner of the Twelve, was able to reach agreement on a substantive report. The Twelve believe that this subject should remain at the forefront of the multilateral debate on disarmament.

It is true that consensus eluded us on two major questions: nuclear disarmament, and naval armaments and disarmament, on both of which we are obliged to acknowledge the persistence of fundamental divergences. As with other items, differences are due to sincerely held and principled positions on complex matters of substance. They cannot realistically be reconciled simply by recourse to verbal formulas, however elegantly drafted these may be. The task of achieving consensus is all the more daunting because the issues we address in this forum concern the security of Member States and are therefore of paramount importance to every one of

(Mr. Whelan, Ireland)

us. But if the discussion on those two items did not result in consensus on substance, it is satisfying to note that the manner in which they were reported to the Commission demonstrated the validity of the measure provided for in section 3, paragraph 4, of the reform programme.

As the Chairman pointed out on more than one occasion, the working agenda, as envisaged in the reform programme, is of universal concern to all participants in the Disarmament Commission. The Twelve were among the delegations which participated in the debate in the Committee of the Whole last week on this key element of the reform programme. Like other delegations, the Twelve were able to put forward for consideration some preliminary ideas and suggestions as their contribution to the process of reaching agreement on a new working agenda.

I need not repeat in detail the views we expressed during the debate, but I should like to recall that among the general criteria identified by the Twelve as offering a useful basis on which to proceed were that the working agenda should be broad-based and flexible, that it should be balanced and acceptable to all delegations, and that it should allow for the inclusion of items deriving from the range of issues that have come, or may come, before the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament. The Twelve also considered that the working agenda should comprise items that are specific and clearly defined, and that the emphasis should be placed on selecting items susceptible of attaining consensus within the time-frame specified in section 3, paragraph 3, of the reform programme.

We should not, above all, lose sight of the fact that the Disarmament Commission was intended to be the sole deliberative body within the United Nations system for the consideration and making of recommendations on selected, specific issues in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Whelan, Ireland)

The Twelve also suggested that the most practical and efficient means of making progress would be to establish an open-ended working group under your direction, Mr. Chairman, to undertake such consultations as you might deem appropriate. The Twelve share your assessment that consultations would need to continue beyond this session of the Disarmament Commission and, in particular, during the next session of the First Committee at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The Twelve consider that such a mechanism, based on the successful experience of last year, which resulted in agreement being reached on the reform programme, would be extremely effective and would also command widespread support in the Commission. If that general approach were agreed upon, we feel that the ideas advanced by all the delegations that participated in this debate could provide you, Sir, with a valuable starting-point for your consultations. Naturally, such further suggestions as may emerge in the course of consultations would also be taken into account.

For their part, the Twelve are ready to play an active role in close co-operation with the Chairman and with other delegations in seeking to bring forward some specific ideas that might contribute to the selection of items for inclusion in next year's working agenda. The Twelve are confident that if we can proceed in this way the goal we share in common - namely to reach agreement on next year's working agenda - can be realized at the organizational session in December.

In conclusion, the Twelve consider that a solid basis has been laid at this session that can assure the future well-being of the Disarmament Commission. There is now every reason to believe that even more progress can be made next year, provided that the reform programme is fully implemented. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the consultations you undertake, Sir, on the working agenda for 1991 should succeed. In that endeavour you will have the full support of the Twelve.

Mr. KOTEVSKI (Yugoslavia): This year's session of the Disarmament Commission has, I would say, been unique by reason of its character, importance, content, work and successful result. In this connection, let me present some of the views of my delegation on this year's session.

The question of disarmament and its consideration within the United Nations has always been of exceptional importance for us. Along with the non-aligned and other like-minded countries, Yugoslavia has always paid particular attention to the development of multilateralism and to the United Nations and its bodies that deal with these problems. In that context, we attach special importance to the Disarmament Commission as the only deliberative body dealing with the question of disarmament in which all countries may present their views and proposals in this field.

However, considering the possibilities, the results achieved up until this session have been modest indeed. Therefore, it was with special attention that we approached the consideration of the question of the rationalization of the Commission's work.

Let me recall that a few days ago my delegation presented, on behalf of the non-aligned countries, our general views on these issues. While expressing a readiness to render our full contribution to the promotion of the work of the Commission, we pointed out that certain shortcomings, which did not stem primarily from the organizational work - however inadequate it may be - but reflect in large measure the lack of political will on the part of some important factors to accept a more substantive and decisive role for the world Organization in the field of disarmament.

Perhaps more than anything else, this session has demonstrated that much more could have been achieved in the past if a little more readiness had been expressed. We may indeed be more or less satisfied with the content of the texts

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

adopted on some of the items on the agenda of this session. The fact is, however, that agreement on them is what we aspire to. Therefore, we cannot but express our satisfaction that the Commission has, after a decade of work, succeeded in agreeing on final documents on five out of six items on its agenda that were supposed to be finalized this year. Agreement on some very complex issues on which we have deliberated for years cannot by definition reflect a national position of individual countries or groups of countries. Rather than that, it is a combination of our endeavours to determine, to the extent possible, the common ground, guidelines and activities of the international community.

The United Nations is an irreplaceable centre for harmonizing interests, views and concrete actions in the present-day interdependent world in which multilateralism is, in fact, another word for co-operation.

In these circumstances, the Disarmament Commission has asserted itself and we are confident that its role should be strengthened and promoted. I should also proffer a more detailed assessment of the work of individual working groups on this occasion and of their results. However, let me comment briefly on just some of them.

My delegation, like many others, is disappointed that no substantive progress has been made in the consideration of one of the most important questions, and that is the complex issue of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we consider that this issue should be given special attention during the consultations on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the Disarmament Commission.

On the other hand, it is significant, in our opinion, that the Commission was able to agree on a balanced set of recommendations on conventional disarmament, bearing in mind the ever greater importance of these issues, on the bilateral, the regional, or for that matter even on the universal levels, particularly since these

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

problems are very complex and since the positions maintained in their regard are often very different indeed.

My delegation considers that the agreement reached in the Working Group of the "round" is, among other things, yet another proof of the central role and primary responsibility of the world Organization in the field of disarmament, as stipulated in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, I cannot but stress that, in our opinion, and in the opinion of the majority of the members of the Commission, the document on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament could have been more committal and concrete in that regard.

As far as the report of the Group that has dealt with the question of South Africa's nuclear capability is concerned, I am pleased to note that the Commission has finally been able to agree and to speak with one voice in expressing the concerns of the international community over South Africa's nuclear capabilities.

Let me point out that my delegation shares the opinion expressed by other delegations on the character and content of the proposed declaration of the 1990s as the third disarmament decade. It is concise and forward looking. However, we believe that much more was to be expected in directing international activities in this area.

As a perennial sponsor of the General Assembly resolution on naval armaments and disarmament, my delegation considers that it is of significant importance that the Commission was able to ensure the support of all but one delegation for the document that deals with this increasingly important question. The document is, in our view, constructive and flexible, and it takes into account existing differences, and at the same time contains a number of substantive findings and recommendations.

(Mr. Kotevski, Yugoslavia)

Let me also mention the useful exchange of views and objective information on military matters, which will be the subject of our substantive deliberations next year.

In conclusion, I should like to point out again that the fact that the Disarmament Commission has been able to achieve some concrete results at this session is due to the more constructive approach taken by all its members. For their part, the non-aligned countries have attempted, and I believe very successfully, to contribute with a constructive and flexible approach to the outcome of this session, and thus to the strengthening of the role of the Commission and the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

I wish, Sir, particularly to thank you for your tireless efforts and dedication with a view to the achievement of positive results at this session. I should also like to express our deepest thanks and appreciation to all the Chairmen of the various working bodies of the Commission for their outstanding contributions to that end.

Mr. AKALOVSKY (United States of America): As we conclude the work of the 1990 session of the Disarmament Commission, the United States delegation believes that we can look with satisfaction on our accomplishments during the last three weeks. When we started, there was some concern about how the Commission would implement its package of reforms. It was not clear that work on all agenda items would be completed, nor what this would mean for the future of the Disarmament Commission.

Most of these questions have been resolved in a positive way. We now look forward to the discussions that will take place on the margins of the upcoming First Committee meeting to address further steps that may be needed to improve the effectiveness of disarmament deliberations, both in the Disarmament Commission and

(Mr. Akalovsky, United States)

in other appropriate forums of the United Nations for discussions on disarmament. We have every reason to expect that those discussions and the organizational meeting for next year's session of the Disarmament Commission will be productive and provide an agenda of new issues for consideration. In this regard, may I express the hope that the spirit of co-operation and realism that has helped our deliberations at this session of the Commission will also prevail in our upcoming discussions on the agenda. We hope that agreement on this fundamental question will be possible without lengthy debate.

On behalf of my delegation, I welcome the realism and positive attitude which has been evident in the last three weeks. We note that reports on five of the Commission's agenda items have been adopted by consensus by all delegations. My delegation feels that this willingness to accommodate differing views is a hopeful sign for our continued ability to discuss disarmament issues in multilateral forums.

(Mr. Akalovsky, United States)

We also hope that it is a harbinger of co-operation in the First Committee this fall. The spirit of reform which has marked the Disarmament Commission's session this year could usefully carry over into the session of the First Committee next fall. A greater effort to reduce the overall number of resolutions considered by the First Committee would ease our work-load there considerably. My delegation would also like to see a greater number of resolutions developed in a way that would make possible their adoption by consensus.

As everyone is aware, my Government hopes to conclude agreements in several arms-control areas later this week. These agreements are evidence of the changes the world has undergone in the last half decade. The tensions which marked the last 40 years are receding still further into the background, and we expect this trend to continue.

It is time to concentrate our attention on new concerns. For this reason, my delegation welcomed the discussion of objective information on military matters, and we look forward to taking up this issue again next year. The rest of the Disarmament Commission's agenda for next year should similarly be more forward-looking and reflect the emerging security concerns of tomorrow, rather than revisiting the long-debated topics of the past.

The United States is committed to the continued discussion of disarmament issues in multilateral forums. There are some specific issues which can best be handled regionally or in a body such as the Conference on Disarmament. However, many States would like to focus in a political way on so-called global problems or on global aspects of regional and bilateral problems. This is neither multilateralism in the truest sense, nor does it create a constructive atmosphere in which States have the confidence that their security concerns are safeguarded while they negotiate. While encouragement and support from non-participants can be

(Mr. Akalovsky, United States)

helpful, we believe that only the States directly concerned in the disarmament issues under negotiation should participate if there is to be any chance of achieving effective agreements.

In any case, the appropriate forums - the First Committee of the General Assembly and the United Nations Disarmament Commission - do exist for States to address the general aspects of disarmament. These forums should continue to be used for this purpose since the Conference on Disarmament, as an autonomous body, needs to concentrate its efforts on issues on which enough common interest exists to make it possible to achieve results. In that regard, the United States delegation is again disappointed at the continued low level of participation by United Nations Members in the work of the Disarmament Commission. Poor participation undermines the Disarmament Commission reforms we have achieved with difficulty, and reduces the value of this body.

I would like to conclude my remarks with some comments on specific issues which arose in connection with the work of the Commission.

As members know, the United States did not participate in the Disarmament Commission's consultations conducted by you, Mr. Chairman, on naval armament and disarmament. We continue to oppose any discussion of this topic. Furthermore, the relationships among the various naval forces are so different as to preclude a common basis for negotiations. The requirements for naval armaments and activities of various nations are inherently asymmetrical and are based on broader geographical, political, strategic and other military factors. Located between, and separated from, allies by two oceans, the United States relies on maritime activities and freedom of navigation under international law to protect its security and trade interests. Nevertheless, despite our firm position on this issue, in the spirit of co-operation we did not persist in objecting to appending

(Mr. Akalovsky, United States)

the report of the Chairman's consultations on this topic to the report of the Disarmament Commission this year. We, of course, discussed this issue early in our proceedings. And we have not insisted that that report be handled as a separate paper, as was the case in the past.

On another subject, we welcome the consensus reached in the report of the Working Group on the question of South Africa's nuclear capability. We hope to continue to send a strong message of world opposition to the racist policy of apartheid, and note with pleasure the positive steps already taken by both the South African Government and the African National Congress to create the climate necessary for negotiations.

We wish to emphasize that it is the policy of the United States to encourage all States, not just African States, to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). South Africa's adherence to the NPT would be yet another welcome sign of its positive political evolution. We would have preferred to see this key point reflected in the Disarmament Commission's report on South Africa. Nevertheless, in spite of this omission, we believe the document accurately reflects international concern about South Africa's capability to produce nuclear weapons. And, while we also note South Africa's acknowledgement that it possesses the capability to produce nuclear weapons, we do not interpret any part of this report to mean that South Africa possesses nuclear weapons.

May I once again express my delegation's pleasure, Sir, at having seen you occupy the distinguished post of Chairman of the Disarmament Commission this year. We believe that the improved results of this year's session are due in no small part to your persistent effort and skill in conducting our deliberations. My delegation is also grateful to all your associates in the Bureau and in the United Nations Secretariat, in the Department for Disarmament Affairs in particular, who

(Mr. Akalovsky, United States)

have assisted you in your difficult task. My delegation hopes that this spirit of realism and understanding which has permeated our session this year will carry forward. It will help us to sort out the various arms-control and security priorities in the new international situation which we see evolving.

Mr. HOU Zhitong (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Mr. Chairman, as the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission draws to a successful conclusion, the Chinese delegation wishes to extend its appreciation to you for the skill and effectiveness with which you have presided over this important session and for your great contribution to its success. Our thanks also go to the Chairmen of the various working groups, contact groups and consultation groups for the considerable work they have done, and to the Under-Secretaries-General, to the officers and staff members of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and to the interpreters for their co-operation.

The current session of the Disarmament Commission, the very first in the Third Disarmament Decade, is convened against a background of profound changes in the international situation, and is therefore of great importance. The tasks assigned to the Disarmament Commission at its current session by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session were arduous. Our deliberations, though intense and busy, have been carried out in a calm and practical atmosphere. With a businesslike, co-operative and constructive approach, delegations have actively participated in the work and achieved quite a number of positive results by overcoming many difficulties. The Commission has just adopted by consensus the reports with their recommendations as drafted by the various groups and the report of the Chairman on agenda item 7, and has agreed to submit those reports to the General Assembly at its next session for consideration.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

We have concluded our deliberations on six items. We have also carried out a preliminary exchange of views on the new item, entitled "Objective information on military matters". Although the results are not entirely satisfactory and although important differences do exist on some issues, there has been considerable progress in the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission, thanks to the common efforts of all delegations. It is our hope that this will have a positive impact on strengthening even further the multilateral disarmament efforts in general.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

The draft Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, adopted at the current session by consensus, is an important document. It stresses that, despite the progress made, the cause of disarmament has still a very long way to go and confronts us with heavy tasks. It identifies the new challenges faced by the international community in the 1990s; sets the principal targets and tasks of disarmament in the future; and calls for substantial reductions in nuclear and conventional arsenals, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the early conclusion of a convention on the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons. It urges the early completion of the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe and points out the urgent need to address the issue of naval disarmament. The draft declaration emphasizes once again that in the pursuit of the goals and tasks just mentioned the countries possessing the largest arsenals bear special responsibility. That is in line with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. Through the adoption and implementation of the declaration, the cause of disarmament will enter a new stage, thus making a new contribution to the maintenance of world peace and security.

Halting the nuclear arms race and achieving nuclear disarmament have always been priority items on the agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Although consensus has not been reached on all the recommendations, it is still of practical importance to study carefully the positive proposals and propositions put forward by the delegations. This Commission also attaches importance to the consideration of conventional disarmament and has made progress by reaching a consensus. This is a new development. The deliberations on nuclear and conventional disarmament show that the international community believes that the big Powers possessing the largest arsenals should take the lead in halting the arms race immediately and in drastically reducing their existing nuclear and conventional weapons and armed forces.

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

Europe, where there is the highest concentration of arms, should be encouraged and urged to seek to speed up its negotiations to bring about an early agreement on substantial disarmament. It is necessary to prevent and check the use or threat of use of armed force in international relations and to refrain from armed intervention, aggression and military occupation against other countries. All these principles have been reflected in the documents adopted by the Commission at the current session.

A new development which merits mention is that the issue of naval armaments and disarmament has become an important agenda item at this session. A consensus is well within reach after in-depth deliberations. This reflects the common understanding of the international community that naval disarmament constitutes an indispensable component of the entire issue of nuclear and conventional disarmament.

The Chinese delegation is glad to see that the deliberations on the nuclear capability of South Africa have been completed and that a document has been achieved by consensus. China has always supported the just demand of the African countries for a thorough solution of the question of South Africa's nuclear capabilities. We believe that the document adopted at this session will play its due role in checking South Africa's dangerous plan for acquiring nuclear weapons.

The document - reached by consensus at this session - on the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is of practical importance. It reiterates the important principles in the United Nations Charter and in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and reflects the desire of the international community for the further enhancement of the principal role of the United Nations and other international organizations in the field of disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission is an important multilateral disarmament deliberative body with extensive representation and authority. The successful

(Mr. Hou Zhitong, China)

conclusion of this session will have enhanced the role of the Commission. The delegations have conducted useful consultations on the principles for setting the working agenda for next year. It is widely believed that the relevant resolutions and documents of the General Assembly should be taken as the important principles and starting-points in identifying the items on the agenda. Priority should be given to those issues which are of common concern to the international community. At the same time, the selection should both reflect present world realities and allow the necessary vision for the future. We are confident that under your chairmanship, Sir, and through further consultations, a consensus may be reached on the working agenda by all parties, so that the Disarmament Commission may have an even deeper and more effective consideration of the major disarmament issues of common concern and make new contributions to maintaining world peace and security. To that end the Chinese delegation will, as always, be positive, flexible and constructive in joining all delegations in creating a greater role for the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. MORRIS (Australia): At the end of last year's session of the Disarmament Commission my delegation expressed both disappointment at the little that had been achieved and concern that through such inaction the Commission appeared to be in danger of becoming irrelevant to the disarmament process. In our statement we pointed to the need to examine afresh the items on the Commission's agenda. We suggested that more should be done to ensure that the Commission's work kept pace with the dynamics of progress in arms control and disarmament issues outside this forum. We called for a re-examination of the Disarmament Commission's operations.

Much has taken place, Mr. Chairman, since May 1989. Under the chairmanship of your predecessor, Ambassador Bagbeni, concerned delegations were able to agree on a package of reforms and to bring it to the attention of the United Nations General

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

Assembly. More important, at the beginning of this session of the Disarmament Commission, we were able to adopt by consensus that reform package. We have just reconfirmed this with the adoption of the report of the Commission.

Even so, I have to confess that, notwithstanding all those positive developments, my delegation has wondered whether delegations were truly committed to reform. I am pleased to say, therefore, on this final day of this year's session, that the answer clearly appears to be, Yes. A litmus test for my delegation was to see how section 3, paragraph 5, of the reform package - which called on the Commission to make every effort to conclude all its agenda items, except the new substantive items - would be implemented. With the last-minute agreements reached today, that test appears to have been met.

On item 4, the Contact Group concluded its consideration, albeit without agreeing on the text of all proposals for recommendations. None the less it is pleasing to note that there has been some constructive pruning of last year's text, although, clearly, basic differences in the approach to the subject do remain. When the Commission next takes up the issue of nuclear disarmament, it remains to be seen whether we will be better served by beginning from the position reached this year or perhaps instead by focusing attention on a specific aspect of the issue.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

On item 5, we are especially pleased to see the conclusion of an item that has been around for over a decade. Finally, and with one clear voice, members of this Commission have been able to agree on how to express their concern over South Africa's nuclear capability.

Item 6 has also been concluded, taking as it did the impressive combined talents of the ambassadors of Argentina and Brazil. The Disarmament Commission has now agreed on a document, although one that expresses the lowest common denominator of views, outlining the role of the United Nations in disarmament. For our part, we would have preferred a more comprehensive and action-oriented text, but the disparity of views with respect to the role of the United Nations in this field rendered this impossible. Nevertheless, if for no other reason than the thorough airing of differing views on this question we consider that the item served a useful purpose.

On item 7, "Naval disarmament", yet again a Chairman's paper has been prepared taking into account the views of all participating delegations. It is clear from this year's paper that, as in other areas of disarmament, there are differences in approach to this subject. Ambassador Wisnumurti is to be congratulated on his efforts in reflecting accurately the range of views presented.

On item 8, "Conventional disarmament", the painstaking efforts of Ambassador Mellbin of Denmark over the past several years have seen the conclusion of a document that contains a number of practical recommendations. Given the differing perspectives on this complex and sensitive subject, it was no small achievement for the Commission to negotiate an agreed text. We expect that the recommendations contained in the text will help provide a useful frame of reference for future negotiations and deliberations on conventional disarmament.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

Notwithstanding a last-minute hitch, item 9 has also been concluded. The declaration clearly is not to everyone's complete liking, but it does set out in clear and agreed form what the disarmament agenda should be for the coming decade.

Finally, and through the efforts chiefly of Ambassador Hohenfellner, we have charted a course for substantive consideration next year of objective information on military matters.

But with all these accomplishments, our real task has only just begun. Preliminary discussion in the Committee of the Whole suggests that considerable work is before us in deciding how we are to formulate next year's agenda. A number of interesting proposals have been made and we will give these our most careful consideration. The notion of a general agenda and a working agenda is a good one, although it does accentuate the problem rather than offer a real solution. The fact remains that we are required effectively to identify up to three topics for consideration next year, and this will require sensitive handling by all of us. I will not attempt now a simplistic solution to what is clearly a complex problem, but I can assure the Commission that my delegation will actively involve itself in whatever discussions may be co-ordinated in the time ahead.

I have expressed some optimism at the way in which structural changes have taken place in the Disarmament Commission, but this is to address only part of the problem. We also need to look at attitudinal change. Unfortunately, this has not truly evidenced itself at this year's session of the Commission. During discussions in Working Group IV, specifically on whether it was necessary to refer to the need to enhance the role of women in disarmament, my delegation took resort to some fairly rough statistics. We observed that women comprised only about 11 per cent of those in attendance. We added that a quick analysis of the list of delegations seemed to confirm this sort of representation over all. I might say

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

that Australia currently does over three times better than that. We could have extended our statistical survey along more general lines with a breakdown of a number of delegations attending working group meetings, active participants across the range of meetings, and so on. In fact we did do this over a limited period and our findings have necessarily limited validity. None the less it is discouraging. Given the lateness of the hour, I will not now attempt an attendance count. The point, I trust, has already been made.

Perhaps the problem this year lay in the multiplicity and overlapping of meetings. If so, next year's more limited agenda should help in this regard. But certainly we must give particular attention to this aspect of our work. Those who call on the Disarmament Commission to participate in the disarmament process must accept that this body can be only as good as the sum of its component parts.

Another aspect on which I shall touch very briefly relates to the tone and thrust of some statements made by some delegations in the various working groups. It is fundamental that all delegations have a sovereign right to express fully and accurately the positions of their Governments, but in the search for consensus all of us need to consider how best we can reconcile and achieve these often conflicting objectives. We need also to consider how we can shrug off the dogma and self-interest which characterized times past but which should certainly not characterize the future. We need to work harder for a collective voice and to be in step with what is happening outside this body.

The year ahead of us holds great promise and challenge. The world is changing rapidly and will continue to change. Later this week we will look for further progress between the two super-Powers on arms control issues, and this process, it is to be hoped, will continue. The Disarmament Commission does have and can play a role in seeing the world become a safer place, but the part we play depends on us,

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

the members of the Commission. This year has been a watershed in the history of the Disarmament Commission. Let next year's session be the real beginning of a constructive and realistic dialogue between all of us.

Mr. NAIMI-ARFA (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. Chairman, I should like first of all to join other speakers in thanking you for the dedication, patience and leadership you have demonstrated during the work of the Disarmament Commission at its 1990 session. I should also like to take this opportunity to convey my delegation's appreciation to the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies, to the Rapporteur and to the other officers of the Commission who spared no effort to fulfil the mandate entrusted to them in order to enable the Commission to complete the consideration of most of its agenda items in an appropriate manner.

In the new positive international climate, the obvious expectation of the international community is to see that climate duly translated into a multilateral disarmament context. Fortunately, at this session the Disarmament Commission has been able, under your guidance, Mr. Chairman, to meet this expectation to some extent and to register remarkable progress towards its goals and to conclude its consideration of six substantive items on its agenda.

Yet, in spite of the encouraging results of this session, it is with some disappointment that one has to admit that as at previous sessions of the Disarmament Commission the lack of political will among certain delegations as well as rigid adherence to obsolete military doctrines based on the continuation of the arms race prevented the Commission from achieving concrete results on certain very important substantive items, namely, nuclear disarmament, and naval armaments and disarmament. There is no doubt that nuclear and naval disarmament have an indispensable and undeniable role in putting an end to the arms race between the great Powers. Thus progress towards this end would pave the way towards strengthening international peace and security.

(Mr. Naimi-Arfa, Islamic Republic of Iran)

In conclusion, my delegation would like to associate itself with comments made by some delegations, in particular those expressed by the representative of Yugoslavia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries during the meetings of the Committee of the Whole devoted to a preliminary consideration and debate on determining the agenda items for the next session, with a view to enhancing the Commission's efficiency at its future sessions.

Mr. MORITAN (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. Chairman, your chairmanship has certainly constituted a milestone in the history of our Commission, as witness of the results of this session. Allow me to congratulate you.

In the statement that my delegation made in the general exchange of views we indicated that the annex to resolution 44/119 C should contain additional ideas, especially regarding the agenda of subsidiary bodies. Along these lines, we believe that the agenda for the substantive work of the subsidiary bodies should be geared towards practical results and that, wherever possible, it should be linked to concrete negotiations.

Disarmament, in our opinion, comprises a number of different processes which, by their very nature, constitute part of a whole. The various negotiations in this field are complementary in nature, but in addition to this there should be a close relationship between the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. In our opinion, it is necessary to strengthen that relationship and to agree on an agenda that would meet this objective. We have observed, during the current session, the adoption by consensus of the reports on most of our agenda items. This reflects certain characteristics of the current international climate and a readiness on the part of most delegations to seek at least a minimum degree of consensus. This also demonstrates that the Disarmament Commission is capable of producing appropriate results when the political will to do so exists. None the less, in our view it should be pointed out that there would seem to be a certain asymmetry in the way in which that political will is expressed. Most of it comes from a certain group of States. Those which have the greatest responsibility in regard to disarmament seem in fact not to have changed their basic attitude towards the items on our agenda, nor have they changed their approach to the multilateral role that must be played by the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Moritan, Argentina)

This fact prompts us to call for a different type of participation on the part of those States that possess nuclear weapons and all those that have a special responsibility so that we may improve the pace of the Commission's work and produce better results. Moreover, in order for our discussions to be relevant, they need to be backed by substance, and for that purpose we need the co-operation of all. We hope that this will be possible in our work on the next agenda. We are convinced that the Disarmament Commission has an important role to play. We hope that in future we shall be able to take advantage of the experience of the past and of the new energy that has been generated at this session.

OTHER MATTERS

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to recall that at the beginning of the current session we adopted the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" contained in document A/CN.10/137. The adoption of the programme established a milestone for the revitalization of the Disarmament Commission in its functioning as the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. Such a revitalization has been clearly demonstrated at the current session, with the successful conclusion of all the substantive agenda items except the new one, and the adoption of concrete recommendations by consensus.

As many delegations have pointed out, it is imperative for the Commission to implement fully the decisions of the reform programme so that it may be able to continue to play a constructive role within the United Nations disarmament machinery.

In this regard, among other things, the immediate tasks ahead will be the formulation of the working agenda for the 1991 session of the Commission, which should be decided at the organizational session early in December of this year. In

(The Chairman)

view of its importance, we have already been seized of the question and devoted some efforts to a general exchange of view on the issue at the meetings of the Committee of the Whole during the past week. A number of delegations made significant contributions to that effect and thus established a good beginning for further discussion. In order to facilitate our further consideration of this important and delicate issue, it will be necessary to set up an open-ended consultation group. The consultation group could have meetings in the post-session period as well as during the meetings of the First Committee at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

If there is no comment, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: During the post-session period of the Commission, in the summer, it is the intention of the Chair to hold three or four meetings of the consultation group on the subject. The first two meetings are tentatively scheduled for 22 June and 3 August respectively. I am sure those meetings will prove useful in the carrying out of the tasks that lie ahead of us.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the officers of the Disarmament Commission and the Secretariat, as well as on my own behalf, I thank the representatives for the generous sentiments they have expressed. I would like to assure them that those feelings are fully and genuinely reciprocated.

(The Chairman)

We are about to conclude our work. Without doubt the Commission has worked exceptionally hard, as we have been subjected to a rather heavy work-load. The many hours spent in the committee rooms are eloquent testimony to the seriousness and responsibility with which all delegations dedicated themselves to fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to them by the General Assembly. There was an almost unprecedented readiness to work in a conscientious manner. The atmosphere has been characterized by harmony, both in the proceedings of the plenary meetings and in the Working, Contact and Consultation Groups. The fact that these endeavours have been productive is fully reflected in the elaborate and focused discussions and in the impressive array of documents now before us.

I should like now to share some observations concerning our work during this session.

From the very beginning, spurred on by the General Assembly's decision that we should complete our task, there has been an overriding determination to succeed with regard to the agenda items before us.

(The Chairman)

The general exchange of views was of relatively short duration. The various groups began their task in earnest and made use of every single session allotted to them for meetings as well as informal consultations.

In assessing the outcome of the current session - if I may be permitted to say so from my vantage-point as Chairman of this body - I should have liked to be in the position of leaving the Commission with an unequivocally positive assessment of the overall outcome of our work. It is true that the requisite seriousness of purpose characterized our deliberations and all delegations exhibited diligence and co-operation in harmonizing positions whenever possible.

The adoption by the Commission of the document concerning ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission was indeed an exemplary illustration of this atmosphere. That agreement, which in my view is a composite of the experience gained since 1979, has provided a solid basis for improving the efficiency of the Commission.

In this context, it was reassuring to listen to various statements reaffirming the importance attached to the role of the Commission as a deliberative body seeking to provide an impetus to negotiations on disarmament by elaborating proposals and by making recommendations.

As members are aware, the Commission has been under criticism because it has not been successful in formulating consensus recommendations on some issues, and some agenda items have remained for too long. Yet, in seeking to identify, to elaborate and to propose various methods for subsequent negotiations in the appropriate forums, the Commission has demonstrated its usefulness. The potential of the Commission, in terms of its contribution to disarmament, is indeed immense. We have reached a degree of approximation which should provide a measure of satisfaction for all of the delegations.

(The Chairman)

The Contact Group on the overriding issue of nuclear disarmament agreed on a number of recommendations, making it possible for a carefully balanced package to go forward to the General Assembly. While an agreement on a complete set of recommendations eluded the Group, still, the partial success achieved is encouraging for further consideration in other forums.

The question of South Africa's nuclear capability has proven difficult to resolve in the past and has been a recurring item on the agenda. Conclusion of the item has warned the racist régime that the international community will not tolerate the acquisition of nuclear weapons and will be vigilant and watchful to ensure that the continent of Africa will for ever remain a nuclear-weapon-free zone under safeguards and inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The adoption of recommendations regarding the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament clearly demonstrated the importance attached by delegations to the multilateral machinery on disarmament, particularly the role of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and the Conference on Disarmament.

It also underscored the role of the Secretary-General, assisted by a strengthened and adequately funded Department for Disarmament Affairs in the disarmament process. Moreover, the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament and the activities of the World Disarmament Campaign could also contribute significantly to the cause of international peace and security.

Many delegations participated actively in the substantive exchange of views on naval armaments leading to a viable basis for further consideration of the issues involved.

It was encouraging to note that the significance of naval forces in the general military context, as well as the naval dimension of the global arms race, were recognized. While cognizance was taken of some positive developments, the

(The Chairman)

need to widen the scope of negotiations to include certain categories of weapons systems and the adoption of confidence-building measures was acknowledged. The preliminary consideration of the objective information on military matters explored the significance of the agenda item in the regional and global dimension, as well as a possible role for the United Nations.

In the context of the accumulation and increasing sophistication of conventional armaments in various regions, it was particularly heartening that the Commission identified the number of issues and possible measures that would contribute to the goal of general and complete disarmament.

The profound interrelationship between disarmament on the one hand and, on the other, the social and economic development of all nations, especially the developing countries, also received the careful scrutiny of the members in the context of the Third Disarmament Decade. In this regard the need to mobilize world public opinion and a wider dissemination of information was emphasized. In all these endeavours useful and important groundwork has been laid.

I have given a positive assessment of the agenda items that I have mentioned. Yet one cannot escape the reality that our achievements in terms of progress towards the objective of substantive armament limitation have not met the entire scope of our expectation or passed the careful scrutiny of the international community. This is due in part to the complexity of the issues facing us. But if we all share one overriding purpose, namely our common survival in the nuclear age, then we will need to achieve both a convergence of views and a convergence of purpose.

May I now turn to one further matter, to which I referred earlier: the reorganization of our work. During the course of this session we have initiated consultations of a preliminary nature with individual delegations and a group of

(The Chairman)

delegations. If I can derive any conclusion from this final stage of our work, it would appear that if any wider agreement is evolved in this regard, further extensive consultation on the subject would be required. Realizing full well the difficulties involved in coming to an agreement on the specific items for the working agenda of 1991, I have urged delegations, instead, to concentrate first on the rationality or general criteria.

Our efforts will continue during the post-session of the Commission in the summer and the forthcoming session of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

While I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all representatives for the confidence reposed in me, I would humbly request interested delegations to continue to address this issue, especially the identification of criteria, so that the Commission may be able to take a decision during the organizational session in December 1990.

The Disarmament Commission began its session against the backdrop of the forthcoming summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union. The prospect of agreement between them on some issues of global concern was instrumental in generating a more constructive atmosphere for our deliberations. The resumption of meetings between the two major Powers is also indicative of the earnest desire to enhance the negotiating process which could indeed contribute to enhancing our common security. It is our sincere hope that this significant event will lead to a more determined and decisive search for early and effective agreements on the halting and reversing of the arms race, in both its qualitative and its quantitative dimension, and on nuclear disarmament.

Over the years we have witnessed a heightened awareness of the globalized nature of certain fundamental problems now confronting the international community.

(The Chairman)

Consequently there is an increasing convergence of common interests and in an increasingly interdependent world no country or region can hope to achieve optimal economic development or national security on its own. If nothing else, the revolution in communications and transportation has bound us all together in one global community. The destiny of each nation has thus become inextricably bound up with the destinies of other nations. Notwithstanding those positive and reassuring trends, if we are to avoid the possibility of nuclear war, reduce the frequency and destructiveness of conventional conflicts and ease the social and economic burdens, then a fundamental reorientation will be necessary in our thinking on disarmament and security in all its aspects - military, political, economic and social.

We should at last recognize that peace in the nuclear age is indivisible, as nuclear weapons fundamentally alter perceptions and calculations of national and international security. This calls for a framework of negotiation at all levels: subregional, regional and, most important, the global and multilateral level. To this end, it is essential that we reaffirm the central role and primary responsibility of the United Nations in the sphere of disarmament and commit ourselves to enhancing further the effectiveness of the machinery and procedures of the multilateral disarmament process as laid down in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament.

Many of us who have been - and continue to be - involved in disarmament issues strongly believe in the indispensability of the multilateral disarmament process. It is destined to grow in importance. Ultimately, disarmament is not just about resolutions, conventions and treaties, however important these may be; it is about the waste of human and material resources now being diverted to armaments. Poverty and pestilence, hunger and disease afflict an overwhelming majority of mankind. A resolution of those issues can no longer be delayed.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: We are approaching the end of the session. In this connection I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all Vice-Chairmen of the Commission, the Chairmen of the Working Groups and the Consultation Group and the Co-ordinators of the Contact Group and the Consultation Group, namely, Mr. Sergey Martynov of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana of Nepal, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan of Argentina, Ambassador Sergio Duarte of Brazil, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, Ambassador Skjold Mellbin of Denmark, Ambassador Emeka Ayo Azikiwe of Nigeria, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, and the Rapporteur, Mrs. Liberata Mulamula of the United Republic of Tanzania, for their assistance and co-operation in carrying out successfully the tasks entrusted to the Disarmament Commission by the General Assembly.

Also I am sure that the members of the Commission will join me in expressing sincere thanks to the Department for Disarmament Affairs and to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and particularly to the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-chung, and his colleagues, who served as secretaries and assistants of various groups, for their boundless energy and invaluable assistance, including the preparation of the draft texts of the recommendations and reports to the Commission. Let me also convey particular thanks to the interpreters and the conference officers and to all those who have assisted the meetings of the Commission.

I declare the 1990 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission closed.

The meeting rose at 10.25 p.m.